



4.5 Aesthetic and Scenic Resources

This section describes a baseline visual character of INEEL and the surrounding area, including designated scenic areas. The physical environment has been described extensively in the SNF & INEL EIS, Volume 2, Part A, Section 4.5 (DOE 1995).

4.5.1 VISUAL CHARACTER OF INEEL

INEEL is situated on the northwestern edge of the Eastern Snake River Plain. Volcanic cones, domes, and mountain ranges are visible from most areas on INEEL. Features of the natural landscape have a special importance to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and some prominent features of the INEEL landscape are within the

visual range of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The Bitterroot, Lemhi, and Lost River mountain ranges are visible to the north and west of INEEL. East Butte and Middle Butte can be seen near the southern boundary, while Circular and Antelope Buttes are visible to the northeast. Smaller volcanic buttes dot the natural landscape of INEEL, providing a striking contrast to the relatively flat ground surface. The viewscape in general consists of terrain dominated by sagebrush with an understory of grasses. Juniper is common near the buttes and foothills of the Lemhi range, while crested wheatgrass is scattered throughout INEEL.

Nine primary facility areas, which resemble commercial or industrial complexes, are located throughout INEEL (Figure 1-2). Structures generally range in height from 10 to 100 feet, with a few emission stacks and towers that reach 250

Bureau of Land Management Visual Resource Management Objectives^a

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Management objectives</u>
Class I	The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
Class II	The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
Class III	The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
Class IV	The objective of this class is to provide for management activities that require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

a. BLM (1986a).

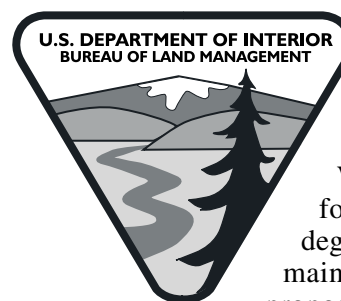
feet. Although many INEEL facilities are visible from public highways, most are located more than one-half mile from public roads.

Approximately 90 miles of public highways cross INEEL. U.S. Highway 20, which is traveled the most by the INEEL workforce, runs east to west across the southern portion of the site. U.S. Highway 26 runs southeast and northwest intersecting Highway 20, and State Highways 22, 28, and 33 cross the northeastern portion of INEEL (see Figure 4-2).

4.5.2 SCENIC AREAS

Lands within and adjacent to INEEL are subject to the Bureau of Land Management's Visual Resource Management Guidelines (BLM 1986a). Adjacent lands are designated as a visual resource Class II area, which allows for moderate industrial growth, preserving and retaining the existing character of the landscape. Lands within the boundaries of INEEL are designated as Class III and Class IV areas, allowing for partial retention of existing character and major modifications, respectively (BLM 1984).

Craters of the Moon National Monument's eastern boundary is located 26.8 miles southwest of



INTEC's main stack. Craters of the Moon is located in an area designated as a Class I Wilderness Area for which minimal degradation must be maintained. Sources proposed for location near Class I areas must exercise consideration that the proposed source will not adversely impact values such as visibility and scenic views. The Bureau of Land Management is considering the Black Canyon Wilderness Study Area, located adjacent to INEEL, for Wilderness designation, which, if approved, would result in an upgrade of the Bureau of Land Management Visual Resource Management class for the area from Class II to Class I (BLM 1986b) Figure 4-2 shows these areas.

